

Night 11

Highlights from Surah Yusuf AS

The Surah was revealed also during the last stage of the Holy Prophet's residence at Makkah. Quraish wanted to discredit him and asked him: "Why did the Israelites go to Egypt?" They knew that the Arabs did not know this story for there was no mention of it in their traditions, and the Prophet^{SAW} had never even referred to it before. In response, Allah^{SWT} revealed the whole story of Prophet Yusuf^{AS} (Joseph) then and there, and the Prophet^{SAW} recited it on the spot. This foiled their scheme and comforted the believers. Following in brief is the story of Yusuf:

Yusuf^{AS} was a son of Prophet Y'aqub^{AS} (Jacob) and a grandson of Prophet Ishaq^{AS} (Isaac) and a great grandson of Prophet Ibrahim^{AS}. Prophet Y'aqub^{AS} had settled in Hebron (Palestine) where his father Prophet Ishaq^{AS} and before him Prophet Ibrahim^{AS} lived. Prophet Y'aqub^{AS} had twelve sons. Prophet Yusuf^{AS} and his full younger brother Binyamin were close and more beloved to their father than the rest of the children. They conspired to get rid of Yusuf^{AS}, and ended placing him in a well. A caravan took him to Egypt where he was sold as a slave in one of the upper class houses, the House of Aziz. The wife of Aziz tried to seduce him, but he refused her advances. Aziz learned of this incident and an investigation proved the innocence of Prophet Yusuf^{AS}. Still, they decided to put him in jail. Prophet Yusuf^{AS} used his time in jail to spread Islamic da'wah to prisoners. He also interpreted their dreams. Once the King had a strange dream, a former prisoner, who was with Yusuf^{AS} in jail, advised him that Yusuf^{AS} could explain it. Yusuf^{AS} interpreted the dream correctly, which included a seven year famine that is coming to the region. The King was impressed and wanted to free Yusuf^{AS}, but he insisted that the King investigates the allegation against him. Yusuf^{AS} was cleared by the wife of the Aziz when she admitted to the King her guilt and his innocence. Yusuf was put in charge of the treasury and the distribution of food for the whole region. He administered the years of the famine in Egypt very wisely. Eventually, he became in charge of Egypt and managed to get his brothers, father, and other family members from Hebron to Egypt. They lived there up to the time of Prophet Musa^{AS}.

Lessons Learned

The story of Yusuf teaches a moral code for individuals in dealing with the ups and downs of life, the worldly distractions, the greed driven relatives and scoundrels, the unexpected setbacks, and adversity in general. The main lesson this story teaches is that if a believer possesses true Islamic character and is endowed with wisdom, he can conquer a whole country with the strength of his character alone. The marvelous example of Yusuf^{AS} teaches us that a man of high and pure character comes out successful even under the most adverse circumstances. When Yusuf^{AS} arrived in Egypt, he was only seventeen years old, a slave, a foreigner, all alone and without any provisions. And then charged with a heinous moral crime and imprisoned for an indefinite term. But throughout this period of affliction, he evinced the highest moral qualities that raised him to the highest rank in the country. We can see our lives through the life of Yusuf^{AS}. The ups and downs of life are real, and life is full of trials. The following lessons are also there in the surah:

The Faith of Prophets Ibrahim^{AS}, Ishaq^{AS}, Y'aqub^{AS} and Yusuf^{AS} was the same as that of Prophet Muhammad^{SAW}, and they all invited their people with the same Message that Prophet Muhammad^{SAW} was inviting. There is another lesson: whatever Allah^{SWT} wills, He fulfills it, but to us it may not be obvious at the time. Other lessons : Muslims should have noble objectives and remain patient in pursuing them. The success or failure rests in the hands of Allah^{SWT}. They

should exert their utmost in the cause of the truth and put their trust in Allah ^{SWT}. The believers, in whose heart emaan is firmly rooted, are not distracted by temporary setbacks.